



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/847,392	05/03/2001	Vitaly Arkadievich Livshits	206440US0CONT	8292

22850 7590 06/17/2003

OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.
1940 DUKE STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

RAO, MANJUNATH N

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1652

DATE MAILED: 06/17/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/847,392

Applicant(s)

LIVSHITS ET AL.

Examiner

Manjunath N. Rao, Ph.D.

Art Unit

1652

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 April 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 8-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 8-12 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 13-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 8-20 are now at issue and are present for examination.

Applicants' amendments and arguments filed on 3-24-03, paper No.10, have been fully considered and are deemed to be persuasive to overcome the rejections previously applied.

Rejections and/or objections not reiterated from previous office actions are hereby withdrawn.

Claim Objections

Claim 13 is objected to because of the following informalities: Claim 13 recites the phrase "wherein said DNA is hybridizes" which is grammatically improper. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 13 recites the phrase "under stringent conditions". A perusal of the specification provides a definition which is very vague or incomplete or at best exemplary. In order to take advantage of the exemplary definition provided in the specification for support and to clearly define the phrase "stringent conditions", Examiner suggests amending the claim as follows, "wherein said DNA sequence hybridizes to nucleotides 557 to 1171 of SEQ ID NO:1, under hybridization conditions in which polynucleotides that are at least 70% identical to

Art Unit: 1652

nucleotides 557 to 1171 of SEQ ID NO:1 would hybridize to nucleotides 557 to 1171 of SEQ ID NO:1, and wherein said DNA encodes....”.

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 13-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for a method of making amino acids using a bacterium expressing DNA with SEQ ID NO:1 or nucleotides 557 to 1171 of SEQ ID NO:1, encoding polypeptide with amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 which renders the cells in which the DNA is expressed, homoserine resistant, does not reasonably provide enablement for such a method in which a bacterium expressing any DNA which hybridizes under stringent conditions to nucleotides 557-1171 of SEQ IDNO:1 and is at least 70% homologous to nucleotides 557 to 1171 of SEQ ID NO:1 and encodes a protein having an activity of rendering a bacterium homoserine resistant including any variant, mutant or recombinant, is used. The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims.

Factors to be considered in determining whether undue experimentation is required, are summarized in *In re Wands* (858 F.2d 731, 8 USPQ 2nd 1400 (Fed. Cir. 1988)) as follows: (1) the quantity of experimentation necessary, (2) the amount of direction or guidance presented, (3) the presence or absence of working examples, (4) the nature of the invention, (5) the state of the

Art Unit: 1652

prior art, (6) the relative skill of those in the art, (7) the predictability or unpredictability of the art, and (8) the breadth of the claim(s).

Claims 13-20 are so broad as to encompass a method for making amino acids using a bacterium expressing any DNA which is a variant, mutant or a recombinant of nucleotides 557-1171 of SEQ ID NO:1 with at least 70% identity thereto and encoding a protein which renders a bacterium homoserine resistant including any variant, mutant or recombinant of said DNA. The scope of the claims is not commensurate with the enablement provided by the disclosure with regard to the extremely large number of DNA sequences that are broadly encompassed by the method claims.

Applicants propose to use the bacteria transformed with above polynucleotides for recombinant process of production of amino acids. Since the nucleotide sequence determines the type of protein and the ultimate function of the encoded protein and since the predictability of which changes in the nucleotide sequence can be tolerated and still obtain a protein having the desired activity, requires a knowledge of and guidance with regard to which amino acids can be altered and which cannot be altered and a detailed knowledge of the ways in which the encoded protein structure relates to its function, changing the nucleotide sequences as proposed by the applicants and/or addition of substantial amount of additional nucleotide sequence unrelated to the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 may not lead to desired function of the polynucleotides in said bacterium. This is because the changes suggested by the applicants will result in an enormous number of nucleotide sequences that may or may not encode the polypeptide which renders the cells resistant to homoserine. It would require undue experimentation by the skilled artisan to make and use the polynucleotides as claimed in the

Art Unit: 1652

claims. The specification is limited to teaching the use of SEQ ID NO: 1 and nucleotides 557 to 1171 of SEQ ID NO:1 for encoding a protein that renders a bacterium homoserine resistant which property is made use of in the above method claims, but provides no guidance with regard to the making of variant and mutant polynucleotides and its use in the above method or with regard to other uses of such polynucleotides. In view of the great breadth of the claim, amount of experimentation required to make the claimed polynucleotides for use in the above method, the lack of guidance, working examples, and unpredictability of the art in predicting function from an encoded polypeptide primary structure (e.g., see Ngo et al. in *The Protein Folding Problem and Tertiary Structure Prediction*, 1994, Merz et al. (ed.), Birkhauser, Boston, MA, pp. 433 and 492-495, Ref: U, Form-892), the claimed invention would require undue experimentation. As such, the specification fails to teach one of ordinary skill how to use the full scope of the polynucleotides encompassed by this claim.

While recombinant and mutagenesis techniques are known, it is not routine in the art to screen for multiple substitutions or modifications of nucleotides, as encompassed by the instant claims, and the base changes within a nucleic acid's sequence can be made with a reasonable expectation of success in obtaining the desired activity/utility are limited and the result of such modifications is unpredictable. In addition, one skilled in the art would expect any tolerance to modification for a given DNA to diminish with each further and additional modification, e.g. multiple substitutions.

The specification does not support the broad scope of the claims which encompass all modifications and fragments of any DNA which is a variant/mutant or having 70% homology to nucleotides 557-1171 of SEQ ID NO:1 and encoding a protein which imparts homoserine

Art Unit: 1652

resistance to a bacterium because the specification does not establish: (A) regions of the DNA sequence which may be modified without effecting the above mentioned activity/utility; (B) the general tolerance of homoserine resistance imparting DNA sequence to modification and extent of such tolerance; (C) a rational and predictable scheme for modifying any nucleotide sequence with an expectation of obtaining the desired biological function and utility; (D) a specific hybridization condition and (E) the specification provides insufficient guidance as to which of the essentially infinite possible choices is likely to be successful.

Thus, applicants have not provided sufficient guidance to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the claimed invention in a manner reasonably correlated with the scope of the claims broadly including a method of making amino acids using bacteria expressing any or all DNA which are at least 70% homologous to and hybridizes to SEQ ID NO:1 or nucleotides 557-1171 of SEQ ID NO:1 under "stringent conditions" and encoding a protein which imparts homoserine resistance to said bacterium. The scope of the claims must bear a reasonable correlation with the scope of enablement (*In re Fisher*, 166 USPQ 19 24 (CCPA 1970)). Without sufficient guidance, determination of DNAs having the desired biological characteristics is unpredictable and the experimentation left to those skilled in the art is unnecessarily, and improperly, extensive and undue. See *In re Wands* 858 F.2d 731, 8 USPQ2d 1400 (Fed. Cir, 1988).

In response to the previous Office action applicants have amended claims 8-11 to overcome the above rejection. However, rejections have been applied to new claims. Applicants submit that with respect to claim 13, provided with nucleotide sequence in SEQ ID NO:1 and the tools necessary to hybridize one DNA to another DNA and determine whether it has necessary

Art Unit: 1652

homology and activity is within the well-described knowledge available in the art and in support of that applicants submit specific pages taken from a laboratory manual. Applicants also argue that homology searches can be done using the BLAST and FASTA search engines. This is not persuasive to overcome the above rejection because while above methods are well known to the skilled artisan, producing and using polynucleotides as claimed by applicants requires that one of ordinary skill in the art know or be provided with guidance for the selection of which of the infinite number of variants have the claimed property. Without such guidance one of ordinary skill would be reduced to the necessity of producing and testing all of the virtually infinite possibilities. This would clearly constitute undue experimentation. While enablement is not precluded by the necessity for routine screening, if a large amount of screening is required, the specification must provide a reasonable amount of guidance with respect to the direction in which the experimentation should proceed. Such guidance has not been provided in the instant specification. As stated above the specification does not establish: (A) regions of the DNA sequence which may be modified without effecting the above mentioned activity/utility; (B) the general tolerance of homoserine resistance imparting DNA sequence to modification and extent of such tolerance; (C) a rational and predictable scheme for modifying any nucleotide sequence with an expectation of obtaining the desired biological function and utility; (D) specific high-stringency hybridization conditions and (E) the specification provides insufficient guidance as to which of the essentially infinite possible choices is likely to be successful. Therefore the above rejection is maintained for claims 13-20.

Art Unit: 1652

Claims 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. These claims are directed to a method which uses a genus of DNA molecules comprising mutants and variants of SEQ ID NO:1, nucleotides 557 to 1171 of SEQ ID NO:1.

The specification does not contain any disclosure of the structure of all DNA sequences that are variants and mutants of SEQ ID NO:1 or nucleotides 557 to 1171 of SEQ ID NO:1. The genus of DNAs that comprise these above DNA molecules is a large variable genus with the potentiality of encoding many different proteins. Therefore, many structurally unrelated DNAs are encompassed within the scope of these claims, including partial DNA sequences. The specification discloses only a single species of the claimed genus which is insufficient to put one of skill in the art in possession of the attributes and features of all species within the claimed genus. Therefore, one skilled in the art cannot reasonably conclude that the applicant had possession of the claimed invention at the time the instant application was filed.

Applicant is referred to the revised guidelines concerning compliance with the written description requirement of U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, published in the Official Gazette and also available at www.uspto.gov.

Terminal Disclaimer

The terminal disclaimer filed on 3-4-03 disclaiming the terminal portion of any patent

Art Unit: 1652

granted on this application which would extend beyond the expiration date of US Patent No. 6,303,348 has been reviewed and is accepted. The terminal disclaimer has been recorded.

Claims 8-11 that were provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being non-patentable over claims 1-4 of US Patent No. 6,303,348 is withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 8-12 are allowable.

Conclusion

Examiner has withdrawn the rejection of claims 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Zakataeva et al., Daniels et al. and Debabov et al. as applicants have shown that there is discrepancy in the sequence taught by Daniels et al. in that Daniels does not teach a stretch of at least 160 nucleotides in the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 and that the protein encoded by the sequence of Daniels et al. does not impart the property of "homoserine resistant" to the bacterium expressing said DNA.

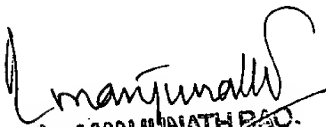
Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after

Art Unit: 1652

the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed; and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Manjunath N. Rao, Ph.D. whose telephone number is 703-306-5681. The examiner can normally be reached on 7.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ponnathapura Achutamurthy can be reached on 703-308-3804. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-308-4242 for regular communications and 703-308-4242 for After Final communications. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-306-0196.


MANJUNATH N. RAO
PATENT EXAMINER

Manjunath N. Rao
June 12, 2003